

**MINUTES OF THE MILLCREEK CANYON COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2020 AT 3:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS HELD ELECTRONICALLY VIA UBER CONFERENCE**

**Present:** Ed Marshall-Chair, Del Draper, Brian Hutchinson, Rita Lund, John Knoblock, Paul Diegel, Polly Hart, Steve VanMaren, Tom Diegel

**Staff:** CWC Executive Director Ralph Becker, Communications Director Lindsey Nielsen

Chair Ed Marshall called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

**1. Review and Approval of the Minutes from the February 19, 2020 Meeting.**

**MOTION:** Paul Diegel moved to accept the minutes from the February 20, 2020 meeting. Del Draper seconded the motion.

The minutes were reviewed and corrected.

**AMENDED MOTION:** Paul Diegel included the proposed changes in his motion. Del Draper seconded the amended motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

**2. Listen to Reports from Committee Members Who have Worked on Issues and Decide how to Move Forward.**

John Knoblock reported that he received two documents from the Forest Service. The first dealt with the fee increase from \$3.00 to \$5.00, talking points for the Forest Service, and background information on the increase. The second consisted of a summary of the agreement between Salt Lake County and the Forest Service regarding the toll booth and fee collection. The last two pages included the budget from the Forest Service totaling \$250,000 that was used to pay personnel costs. Other expenditures included bridge repair and replacement of an equipment garage for a total of \$650,000.

A table was provided on page 10 showing how the budget was to be spent with the \$5.00 increase projected out over the next five years. Mr. Knoblock found the table to be very informative. It was reported that the anticipated revenue was approximately \$1 million with \$160,000 set aside to pay for the fee collection booth and \$400,000 to \$500,000 for Forest Service personnel. There was also reference to the FLAP grant. The importance of including it was stressed as it would provide for better signage and information moving forward. As in the past, they pay for Unified Police and \$40,000 was set aside for Forest Service officers. For years four and five, \$100,000 was set aside for trail upgrades and \$65,000 for restroom upgrades. \$100,000 was reserved for Phase 2 of the connector trail design and NEPA implementation, which was presumed to be intended to connect the trail from Elbow Fork to the top of the canyon. Mr. Knoblock was perplexed by the potential expenditure since Trails Utah has pledged \$80,000 for a trail to be constructed.

Chair Marshall reported that they plan to hire a Project Manager to deal directly with Millcreek Canyon. \$70,000 was allocated the first year and \$79,000 the fifth year. The purpose is to design and plan the improvements for Millcreek Canyon. After the first few years, they will work to implement the improvements. He was most struck by the line item for the Forest Protection Officers/Interpretive Services. The cost starts at \$140,000 in the first year and increases to \$157,500 in year five.

Mr. Knoblock speculated that the cost is for rangers to be on-site to help ensure order and cleanliness. Chair Marshall pointed out that between the cost of hiring the Project Manager and paying for Forest Protection Officers and Interpretive Services, the cost is \$210,000, which is 70% of the \$300,000 increase. To him, that seemed to be a large proportion to commit.

Mr. Knoblock commented that the cost is likely contingent upon being awarded the FLAP grant. The Project Manager will likely be used to help expend the funds from the grant. The comment was made that these are pre-COVID-19 figures and do not include new requirements and projections on the number of visitors allowed up the canyon at any given time. Potential impacts on budgets were discussed. It was noted that even the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) is not sure how much will be contributed going forward by its constituent members.

Rita Lund pointed out that Millcreek City is anticipating a 35% decrease in sales taxes for the next fiscal year. She remarked that the impacts will be extreme.

Ms. Lund had heard there were problems with the trailhead at Rattlesnake Gulch because the parking lot has been under construction. She also was aware that there was more use in the canyon. There were discussions early on at the County level about closing it. Her understanding was that all but two of the restrooms had been closed. The major issue was with people congregating at trailheads. Ms. Lund commented that this committee can help by educating people. Rita Lund was excused from the remainder of the meeting.

Ways to encourage social distancing were discussed. Mr. Knoblock suggested that individual committee members provide feedback to Bekee Hotzee from the U.S. Forest Service and Martin Jensen who serves as the Director of Public Health for Salt Lake County rather than spend time brainstorming proposals. He received no response from Mike Reberg from Salt Lake County or Holly Yocum who is the Salt Lake County Director of Community Services.

Mr. Knoblock reported that the Rattlesnake Trailhead is moving forward as well as an effort to provide a parking lot. Based on the release of COVID-19 and Track funding, trail construction is scheduled for this summer between Elbow Fork and the top of the canyon. Ms. Yocum thought that because the contract had already been awarded, they will likely continue to move forward with the project. Mr. Knoblock also spoke with Leon Barrett from Salt Lake Public Works about the roadway. He indicated that because of potential FLAP grant funding, they plan to continue to repair potholes and make emergency repairs as needed but limit roadwork in the hope that the federal government will eventually pay for it.

Chair Marshall also spoke with Leon Barrett who indicated that the estimate they received to roto mill and resurface the road was \$1.5 million. If the FLAP grant is received, their contribution will

be only \$667,000. He expected the resurfacing of Millcreek Road to be low on the list of priorities based on recent budget constraints.

Del Draper had not received any information on the Boy Scout Camps but stated that the Forest Service is using a count of 116,000 ski passes. He suggested they determine what the trend is for usage since that information does not indicate how many are traveling in each car, how often they return, how many trips are taken in a year, etc.

With respect to Millcreek Road, Chair Marshall reported that he contacted Jared Stewart regarding the timing of the FLAP grant approval. He was provided with a brochure indicating that the applications will be processed in February and a shortlist announced in March. To date, they had received no word. The hope was to have more information by May.

Chair Marshall contacted the State Tax Commission and was informed that of the 8.25% sales tax collected from the Millcreek Inn and Log Haven, 3.5% goes directly to the County and 4.75% goes to the State. 1% was supposed to be earmarked for mass transit and transportation infrastructure. The County also receives Class B and C funds from the State for transportation and roads but he had not yet been able to determine the percentage or the amount. Because the County is not currently receiving those funds, what was to be done in the future was unknown. He pointed out that the tolls go toward Forest Service projects and not to Millcreek Road, which comes out of other County revenue and is collected by the Metropolitan Service District (“MSD”). Chair Marshall explained that the MSD acts as the service provider and determines what impacts the unincorporated County, metro township, and the Town of Brighton will need in terms of maintenance and repair. They then go back to the County to contract for those services.

Chair Marshall spoke with Bart Barker, Executive Director of the MSD, who provided a three-year summary showing how money has been spent in terms of maintenance and repair in Millcreek Canyon. He would forward the information to the committee members the following day and asked that they submit questions and comments.

### **3. Other Business.**

Chair Marshall indicated that while reviewing the list of projects on the shortlist for the CWC grants, a Chipper grant was discussed. He felt strongly that Millcreek Canyon and the National Forest Area is filled with a huge amount of deadfall. They would like that to be cleaned up to the extent possible.

Communications Director, Lindsey Nielsen reported that there was the potential for a CWC hosted Chipper Day in the tri-canyon area. The CWC created three committees, one of which is the Short-Term Projects Committee. Councilman Jim Bradley from the County, Councilwoman Marci Houseman from Sandy, and Mayor Erin Mendenhall from Salt Lake City serve on that committee. One action taken since the creation of the committee was to issue a call for project ideas. Staff was also asked to investigate other potential projects the CWC could take on in the short term. One involved the potential for the CWC to host a Chipper Day in the Tri-Canyon and Parleys Corridor areas. A definitive decision had not yet been made as to whether the CWC will host a

Chipper Day. Ms. Nielsen planned to report on the cost and other details at the next Short-Term Projects Committee Meeting scheduled for April 29.

Chair Marshall stated that there is a lot of accumulated debris along the roadside, which has the potential to ignite and was of concern. He stressed the importance of preventing forest fires.

Paul Diegel was asked to look into the bike lane extension but no action had been taken. He agreed to follow up. It was suggested that he contact John Miller with the City of Millcreek.

It was noted that despite the high number of people and dogs in the area, there is very little waste left behind to be cleaned up. The bag dispensers provided seemed to have made a difference. It was suggested that new protocols be developed to ensure safety. Polly Hart commented that this is the only place people can take their dogs and legally recreate off-leash. There will be problems if they start to restrict that group. Brian Hutchinson suggested that protocols be established to prevent people from congregating at Winter Gate with dogs.

It was suggested that the committee look for opportunities to get articles published about how the current dog and bike rules are working. It was recommended that the public be educated about proper protocols in the area. Chair Marshall agreed with the need for social distancing and masks but stated that they should distinguish between the narrow trails and the road above the Winter Gate and Porters Fork. His experience was that there has not been congregating among dog walkers above Winter Gate.

Tom Diegel reported that there were three comprehensive articles published in *The Salt Lake Tribune* addressing trails around the valley in the wake of COVID-19. He stated that the reporter may be interested in writing a follow-up article specific to Millcreek Canyon.

Parking issues were next discussed. Chair Marshall reported that the Forest Service would like to implement an electronic board at the toll booth. Brian Hutchinson researched the issue and stated that they discussed the ability to communicate between the upper and lower portions of the canyon.

Del Draper reported that the bankruptcy of the Boy Scouts is at the national level and should not affect the efforts of the committee. What will have an impact is whether the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints pulls out of scouting in Utah since doing so reduces the scouting presence significantly. The issue is now what is to become of Camp Tracy. Mr. Draper spoke with Wendy Fisher from Utah Open Lands who is one of three conservation groups in Utah. The others are The Nature Conservancy and Trust and Public Lands. It was reported that Utah Open Lands worked on the Bonanza Flat acquisition. Ms. Fisher stated that Utah Open Lands would be pleased to assist with the project. Various ways such an acquisition could be structured were discussed such as purchasing Camp Tracy and leasing it back to the Boy Scouts. The actual ownership would be subject to the Boy Scouts continuing to be able to use the property. The more traditional method would be to pursue a conservation easement where the Boy Scouts would be paid to agree in exchange that no development take place. A Right of First Refusal could also be filed in the event the Boy Scouts wants to sell it at some point.

The comment was made that if the property is in a trust, there already may be restrictions on what it can be used for and the Boy Scouts would not be free to sell it. Going forward it would be important to determine the worth of the land and the specifics of the trust. Mr. Draper offered to conduct more research on the ownership of the land.

Chair Marshall reported on the issue of communications from the top of the canyon. John Knoblock was asked to raise the issue with Bekee Hotze.

John Knoblock stated that the parking lot at the bottom of Rattlesnake Gulch is being redone and Sarah Bennett from Trails Utah submitted a grant to the Utah Outdoor Recreation Office working alongside Zinnia Wilson from the U.S. Forest Service to redo the Rattlesnake Gulch Trail. The intent was to build a separate trail on an 8% grade as a segregated biking trail.

#### **4. Adjournment.**

**MOTION:** John Knoblock moved to adjourn. Paul Diegel seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

The Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:30 p.m.

*I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Millcreek Canyon Committee held Tuesday, April 14, 2020.*

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes  
T Forbes Group  
Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_